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Dr. Roessler's problem was not a difficult one. The way for its solution had been well prepared by Arnold, Berger, Düsel, Franz, Matthews, Paull, and others. Nor did anything very troublesome present itself; the work is, to a large extent, a tabulation, epoch by epoch, type by type, of the soliloquies of some representative German dramas. There was but little racking of the brain required; for classification, based on "the predominating element," is, on the whole, quite easy. And some problems were avoided: e.g., the difference between comedies and tragedies in regard to the technic of the soliloquy in the case of Gryphius, Lessing, and Ludwig. The author should have noted and examined this characteristic.

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The Use of the Infinitive Instead of a Finite Verb in French, by
B. F. LUKER. New York: Columbia Press, 1916. 115 pp.

In this Columbia dissertation, Mr. Luker, restricting his investigation to the French field, takes up the four types of infinitive used in place of a finite verb and interprets them all as due to ellipsis. Two of the four do not to-day need a rediscussion to carry conviction: ellipsis of a verb of necessity is back of the modern French infinitive in brief notices and directions; and from the time Gaston Paris named the verb to be supplied with the *or del bien faire* group, it has hardly been worth questioning that the omitted form is the imperative of *penser*. In the latter case Mr. Luker's extensive collection of examples for the non-elliptical and the elliptical phraseology is of interest and value in showing the completeness of the parallel between the two.

There remain the Old French infinitive in the place of the imperative in prohibitions, and the so-called historical infinitive. Ellipsis is by no means self-evident in these instances, and if it furnishes the solution, a definite demonstration of this is to be welcomed.

In the prohibitory infinitive (*amis, nel dire ja*) Mr. Luker sees ellipsis of *vueilles* or *voilliez*, and believes the construction to be derived from the Latin *noli, nolite* + inf., which would account for its restriction to prohibitions. The only positive argument ad-

vanced in support of this view is chronological and is based on the French psalters. In the Cambridge Psalter, of very early date, the prohibitive infinitive occurs only once; the frequent *noli* + inf. of the Latin psalter is regularly translated by *ne vueilles* + inf. In the Metz Psalter, of the middle French period, *ne vueilles* + inf. is still a common translation, but a rendering by *ne* + inf. is not rare. In the *Psalterium gallicum vetus*, of yet later middle French, while *ne vueilles* + inf. is still common, *ne* + inf. is very frequent. This, Mr. Luker thinks, points to the development of *noli* + inf. into *ne vueilles* + inf., and of this by ellipsis into *ne* + inf.

But if the situation in the psalters is of any value as light on the origins, it can only be so if the construction arises as a learned development of the middle French period. Otherwise this interesting series of examples is simply an indication that the two late translators of the psalter took kindly to a French form the aptness of which made it ready to their hand.

Now the infinitive for the imperative is a widespread phenomenon. It seems Indo-European, occurring in Sanskrit and Greek, tho in its restriction to prohibitions it is peculiar to Romance territory, where it is very general. In France the indications point to its early origin and thoroly popular character. If an ellipsis, it was a pre-literary, general Romance ellipsis.

Note, however, that the Latin itself took none too kindly to the simple negated imperative form for prohibitions, which it tended to render by now one, now another of a half-dozen paraphrases. These competing forms of expression were reciprocally enfeebling, so that the way was open for the entrance of a new competitor. That this new competitor arose thru an ellipsis is not absolutely excluded, but it is quite as natural to consider that in the construction there is a simple naming of the activity in its broadest content by means of the infinitive, so that the negative adverb joined to the infinitive brings about an exclusion of the activity in any and all of its manifestations (cf. English *No smoking!*). We thus obtain a sweeping and brusk prohibition and this will account for its far greater frequency when accompanying the familiar or contemptuous *tu* than when associated with the suaver *vous*.

It should be added that later in his discussion (p. 19 and p. 77) the author weakens his own case by conceding that other verbs than *vouloir* may also contribute to the background of the ellipsis, and so

undermines the one virtue in his *noli*-ellipsis theory—that it accords well with the Romance restriction to prohibitions.

The fourth and last theme treated is the “historical infinitive” (*il s'éloigna tout honteux et nous de rire*). Here the supposition of ellipsis of some form of the verb *penser* in no wise furnishes an explanation of the two characteristic traits of the construction—the introductory *et* and the change of subject. In the midst of lively narration, we desire to mark a sudden, unforeseen consequence of an act just recounted. The infinitive—a mere naming of the new activity stripped of restrictions in time, person, or number—constitutes a sudden syntactical break that serves excellently to bring about the effect desired.¹ The unanticipated infinitive, as Kalepky would say, takes on almost the value of an interjection.

In an appendix the author summarizes some of the preceding discussions of the constructions he treats. The list of texts consulted should have been better co-ordinated with the nomenclature employed in the book. Not infrequently texts referred to in abbreviated form in the body of the work are either listed under a different word in the bibliography or omitted altogether.²

The absence from the bibliography, and evidently also from Mr. Luker's reading, of two items has cost him several of the earlier examples of the historical infinitive, one of which (“*Cil pasent outre et il dou ceminer, Tout un sentier se prent a regarder, Voit les lions*,” *Bueve de Hantone*, continental version, 3781) is the earliest yet adduced and furnishes an indispensable link for those disposed to look upon the ellipsis theory with favor. The missing references are: Ebeling, *JBRPh.*, v, 235-36, and Anderten, *Der verkürzte Hauptsatz im Frz.*, Göttingen, 1912.

The ellipsis theory had previously been proposed for all of the cases discussed in this work. The author's collection of examples from the Old and Middle French is a welcome supplement to our information, but it is doubtful that it adds, in the case of the two constructions for which there is any present tendency to question the correctness of the explanation, any strength to the hypothesis.

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¹ See Meyer-Lübke, *Grammatik*, III, § 529.

² So p. 14, “*Altfr. Bib.*, Foerster, vol. 5”; p. 15, “*Guillaume*”; p. 17, “*Louis*.”